(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

The Principal Secretary, Commerce and Industries Department, Government of West Bengal in his letter dated 15.4.2004 addressed to the Secretary, Planning Commission (copy endorsed to Joint Secretary, Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India) requested for allocation of fund for projects in West Bengal under two schemes of Leather Sector *viz.* Scheme for Integrated Development of Leather Sector and Scheme for Infrastructure Strengthening of Leather Sector having 10th Plan outlays of Rs. 290 crore and Rs. 110 crore respectively.

(b) Out of outlay of Rs. 110 crore in the Scheme for Infrastructure Strengthening of Leather Sector, an amount of Rs. 5 crore has already been earmarked for West Bengal for setting up of a Leather Goods Park.

The other scheme *i.e.* Scheme for Integrated Development of Leather Sector is yet to be approved by the Government. Allocation of fund under the said scheme would be decided by the Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion once the scheme is approved.

Population under BPL

155. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that around 26 percent of our population still live below the poverty line; and

(b) what is our specific action plan for reducing poverty during the Tenth Plan period and how far we have succeeded in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) Yes Sir, the poverty ratio estimated from the

large survey data of NSS (National Sample Survey) 55th Round (1999-2000) are as follows:

Percentage and number of poor

Year	Poverty ratio			Number of poor (Million)		
	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total
1999-2000	27.1	23.6	26.1	193.2	67.0	260.2

The Planning Commission estimates poverty at national and state level from the large sample surveys on household consumer expenditure conducted by the NSSO at an interval of approximately five years. The latest such survey was conducted in 1999-2000 (NSS 55th Round).

(b) The Tenth Five Year Plan sets a target of 8% average GDP growth for the period 2002—07 and while identifying specific and monitorable targets envisages reduction of poverty ratio by 5 pecentage points by 2007 and by 15 percentage points by 2012.

The Tenth Five Year Plan states that although growth has strong direct poverty reducing effects, the frictions and rigidities in the Indian economy can make these processes less effective. The Tenth Plan has therefore been formulated in a manner to explicitly address the need to ensure equity and social justice. There are four main components to this approach.

First, agricultural development is viewed as a core element of the Plan since growth in this sector is likely to lead to the widest spread of benefits especially to the rural poor.

Second, the growth strategy of the Tenth Plan aims to ensure rapid growth of those sectors which are most likely to create high quality employment opportunities.

Third, to supplement the impact of growth with specific programmes aimed at special target groups. While these programmes would continue in the Tenth Plan steps would be taken to ensure that they are effective in achieving their objectives.

Fourth, reducing inter-regional disparties through greater focus on growth in backward states and regions.